

FS Direct

Direct Communication to Foreign Service Employees and Family Members
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FLO Homepage on the Intranet

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html>

FLO Homepage on the Internet

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

Email FLO – flo@state.gov



EMPLOYMENT

[The Network](#) - the FLO webpage, updated monthly, provides job opportunities and listings in the Washington, DC area.



INFORMATION & RESOURCES

FLO Publications on the Internet may be found at

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/>



FS FAMILY MEMBERS

Job Seekers Network Group supports the DC area job seeker.

Calendar- <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/37848.pdf>



FS DIRECT SUBSCRIPTIONS

To subscribe, please use the following links:

Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9156.htm>

Intranet: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/FLOSubscription.html>

Via AAFSW: Visit the FLO area of the AAFSW web site at <http://www.aafsw.org> and click on FLO newsletters.

FS Direct is also available on the FLO Internet web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/c5709.htm>

Take Note -

It's that Time of Year Again!

ASSOCIATES OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WORLDWIDE (AAFSW)

Would be happy to receive your donations for

The 45th Annual Book Fair and Art Corner, October 2005

Proceeds from the Book Fair and Art Corner are mostly used for charitable donations and for advocacy work on behalf of our Foreign Service Community

**We would appreciate donations of host-country handicrafts
For the very popular Art Corner**

SORRY, NO MORE BOOK DONATIONS, PLEASE!

Donated items may be sent via unclassified pouch to:
**THE AAFSW Book Room
Room #B816 Main State (HST)**

To drop-off donations, please contact Virginia Jones in the
Book Room #B816 Main State (HST), tel.(202) 223-5796.

For Summer Transfers –

The **A Bureau** is devoting its webpage this summer to employees who are transferring to their next posts of assignment abroad. The [“A Bureau Kiosk”](#) provides a quick review of a variety of articles on this topic, as well as key ALDACs, Department Notices and other information of concern to employees. Please let your colleagues know about the **A Bureau Kiosk on OpenNet Plus**.



Job Opportunities –

- In the Family Liaison Office: [Program Specialist, GS 9 - 11](#)

- **In the Transition Center:** Writer/Editor, GS 11

The Transition Center is seeking a writer/editor for the Overseas Briefing Center, located at FSI. The incumbent reports to the OBC Center Coordinator and coordinates all aspects of publication production (hard copy, multimedia and online). The incumbent coordinates the publication of articles and reports relating to resources of the Overseas Briefing Center. The job also includes initiating and following through on projects to completion, which meet the needs of the Foreign Service community, maintaining and updating existing publications, including web pages, and supervising the distribution of all Transition Center publications. Contact Cathy Mason (703) 302-7223.



Summer Concerts –

Just in from overseas and looking for something to do? The National Park Service offers a series of [free summer concerts](#) at parks throughout Washington, DC. With such a line-up, there is sure to be something for everyone!



Employment

Important Survey for DOS Civil Service EFM's Accompanying FS Spouse

Department of State Civil Service (CS) employees accompanying their Foreign Service spouse on assignment overseas must request Leave Without Pay (LWOP) in order to remain on the rolls of the Department and continue their eligibility for benefits without a break in service.

To determine the feasibility of establishing a “centrally-managed over-complement status” for DOS Civil Service EFM's who request LWOP status, FLO is seeking the following information: data on the number of EFM CS employees currently overseas, either in LWOP status or who have resigned from the DOS CS appointments. Please complete the [DOS Civil Service EFM Survey](#) no later than July 29, 2005.



Training Session Scheduled for October

The Department is pleased to announce the second session of **e-Entrepreneurs**, the professional training and support pilot program for Foreign Service spouses (Department of State, US Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service), funded by the **Una Chapman Cox Foundation**, a private, non-profit foundation established to provide support to the Foreign Service.

The program is aimed at training FS spouses in how to create a portable, home-based business via the Internet, thus overcoming career obstacles inherent with frequent moves and service at isolated posts. Virtual outsourcing is an option that has proven itself in the new "knowledge economy" and is forecasted to show tremendous growth in the future workplace.

The e-Entrepreneur training program will be held October 24 – 26, 2005 in the Washington D.C. area (in Falls Church, VA) and facilitated by the StaffCentrix company. Only 25 training spots are available for this pilot session. StaffCentrix and the Family Liaison Office will review applications and select participants based on responses to the questionnaire and suitability criteria developed by StaffCentrix.

- **Eligibility:** Applicant must be the spouse of a Foreign Service direct-hire employee (see above).
- **To Apply On-line:** Go to <http://www.portablecareer.com/apply.htm>
- **Closing of application time:** applications will be accepted until training class is full.

Note: further e-Entrepreneur training sessions are planned for 2006.



Overview of FLO's Employment Programs

The Family Liaison Office strives to meet the needs of family members seeking employment both domestically and at posts overseas. In addition to ongoing programs and services, a number of recent employment initiatives have been undertaken by FLO. FLO has prepared an [overview of these programs and services](#).



Going Global: International Job-Hunting Information at Your Fingertips



Going Global's online, unlimited-access subscription database contains country career guides, corporate profiles and more than 10,000 international job openings. This valuable resource is available free to Foreign Service spouses (you must first [obtain a password via OpenNet Plus](#)). Once a user name and password has been established, spouses may access the following information via the Internet:

- The **Going Global Country Career Guides** provide professional advice and insider tips for 23 countries on such topics as employment trends, recruiters, staffing agencies, work permit regulations, salary ranges, resume writing guidelines, professional and trade associations, and cultural advice. More than 500 resources are provided per country, all with detailed explanations and hot links directly to the latest information.
- The **Going Global Key Employer Directory** features corporate profiles for 25,000 worldwide companies in industries like consumer goods, consulting services, finance, and information technology. The Directory features local and multinational employers, and includes data on sales, revenues, brands, officers, key contacts and more.

The **Going Global Key Employer Directory** also contains worldwide job listings for companies such as Coca Cola, Proctor & Gamble, FedEx, Johnson & Johnson, Hewlett Packard, General Motors, Chevron-Texaco, and General Electric. The user can search worldwide by industry, country, and key word and set up an alert that emails customized job announcements. **All job postings are updated daily!**

GOING GLOBAL "KEY EMPLOYER DIRECTORY" COUNTRIES

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
Mexico
United States

SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil
Chile
Argentina

SOUTH AFRICA

ASIA/PACIFIC

Australia
China
Hong Kong
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
South Korea
Singapore

INDIA

EUROPE

Austria
Belgium
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
Norway

Russia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom





Reinvention: Zen and the Foreign-Service Spouse

*By Adrienne Scherger
Tirana, Albania*

No matter what the school board is saying, there is one group of people for whom evolution is a fact of life. Deciding to follow one's spouse around the globe, through Missions big and small, calls for the flexibility of a yogi and an ability to spin that would make a DC spinmeister green with envy. Foreign Service spouses are a skilled bunch, and it's not always in the expected ways. Recently, my position as Community Liaison

Office Coordinator (CLO) allowed me to survey the education and work-experience of our small community of EFM (eligible family member) spouses. My first thought upon completion of the task was that if all of us "dependents" got together and formed a company, we'd be a force to be reckoned with. Just here in Tirana, where our surveyed group totaled 13 people, we have five Master's degrees, one Law degree, and one registered Nurse Practitioner. Seven others came to Tirana armed with Bachelor's degrees. Between us, we have writers, teachers, social workers, architects, Romance language experts, business people, two flight attendants, and several office managers. Although our skills are divergent, aside from being smart, well-rounded and, frankly, extremely attractive people, we share one very particular skill in common: We are able to evolve.

Recently I was having a conversation with the wife of a Foreign Service officer here in Tirana. She told me that what she was most proud of in her life as a spouse (and in what other line of work, by the way, are we so constantly referred to by our marital status? Fodder for another column, I suppose) was her ability to find work that was interesting and relevant to her own career goals. This was a revelation to me, because it clearly defines one of the major issues of being in a Foreign Service family—spouses these days are more and more interested in their own career trajectories. Many of us are not willing to give up on our educations and our previous experiences when we leap into the wild and wonderful life of bidding on posts and packing out. In fact, I think many of us see a distinct challenge in keeping ourselves working while we take on the transitory lifestyle of the Foreign Service. I mean, let's face it, any schlemiel can get a job in the States and keep that job and rise through the ranks to retire, forty years later, with a gold watch and a pat on the back. It takes a special person to find meaningful work in a new post every two to three years. However, as special and talented as most Foreign Service spouses are, we all need help from time to time. To that end, I've compiled a list of best practices of those who have come before. Since we're all involved in the US government in one way or another, and we know how they feel about the English language, let's give it an acronym: **SHEHFSSWW** (Six Highly Effective Habits of Foreign Service Spouses Who Work).



Get Ahead of Yourself



It is certainly helpful if you have an interest in a career that is transportable. If you are just starting a career, and are new to this life, think ahead about types of jobs that can move easily. I watched my mother, a teacher by training and passion; find a job in every post of my father's USAID career. Each time we moved she was literally snapped up within days of alerting the International School that she was ready and willing to work. Obviously not all of us are teachers, but we have a distinct technological advantage these days—the Internet allows us the option of telecommuting, and it allows us to explore job possibilities in our new posts before we get there.

Smarten up, Sister (and Brother)

The Internet provides another boon to the life of a savvy mobile spouse—online classes. There are a million ways to get a degree or further an education by taking advantage of virtual classrooms. Your dream degree could be a mere mouse-click away. The Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) also provides some training for spouses. When your other half is conjugating Thai verbs in his (or her) sleep and is knee-deep in language training, get down in the muck with them. The more local language you know, the better your options are for finding work at your next post. Plus, there's something about being able to ask for the restroom or order a beer in five different languages that reeks of class. Hey, it's a perk of our lifestyle. Go with it.

If it isn't Great, Hesitate

This is an important one. I think that those of us who want to work often arrive at our first post (and let's hope we don't make this mistake more than once) and panic. We feel we have to work and so we take the first job we hear about. Then later, when the dust has settled, we see that there may have been other opportunities that would have better fit into our personal career trajectory. I was a victim of "job panic" at my first post as a spouse, and am grateful for the lesson it taught me—take things slowly. The job I had was perfect—for someone else—yet I took it and performed it to the best of my ability, all the while regretting the fact that, three months later, someone else discovered and jumped on a job that was perfect for me. Research is key, and not that difficult. Find people who work in your career area and network with them. This may mean pumping host-country nationals for information, or finding an International Women's group (even if you're a male spouse) whose members have more varied professions than the people who work at the embassy.

It Ain't Always the Dough, Joe (It's the Dojo)

There are plenty of ways that an unpaid (or underpaid) job can help you. Sometimes jobs at the salary you made in the States are simply not available. There are two choices when you're faced with this situation. Don't work at all, or take less money. It's no fun to be paid less than you're worth, but it's even less fun to stew about it. Taking a job on the local economy can sometimes be a blessing in



disguise. You'll meet a wide variety of people in your field, you'll potentially learn a great deal about the host-country culture and language, and you'll have a very interesting talking point on your resume. This is also a way to ensure, to a degree, that you stay within your career. I know an architect whose wife was assigned to a post where, not surprisingly, the embassy had no use for an eligible family member architect. He found a local company who was interested in an American but who could only pay local rates. The experience was positive for all involved, and he was able to continue in his very specific field even while posted overseas. He left that post empowered to stay focused on what he wanted to do, and with the impetus to find more jobs in his field in future posts.

Focus, Focus, Focus, Till it Hurts

Nothing is more helpful than knowing what you want. If you have a specific long-term goal for your career, it is much easier to match up jobs with it than it is to just willy-nilly take what's available and hope that, in the end, your career is satisfying. There are certainly some people who like doing something different at each post, and who are not interested in one particular career track. Those people are fortunate to be able to choose from a wider variety of jobs, and are often rewarded with interesting work. But it is a gamble. At some posts there will be great jobs to choose from, and at others the pickings will be much more slim. For the people who are concentrating on one particular career goal, let your focus be what gets you through job panic.

One spouse, a friend of my mother's, followed her husband throughout Africa, and only took jobs (including volunteer opportunities) that related, one way or another, to Gender in Development. She didn't work at some posts because she was totally committed to only doing work that she loved and that would further her desire to be an expert in her field. After her husband retired, she found herself a position with the UN doing exactly what she always wanted to do. The jobs she had held while overseas were so focused, that by the time she applied for her dream job, her resume was bursting with appropriate skills and apropos experience. Her technique can be a good one if you are able to think in the long-term. In her case, she had kids and school board meetings and other non-career tasks that kept her busy in those posts where she didn't work.

Your Glass is Never NOT Half Full (Even When it Looks Empty)



Here's where you need to channel your inner Zen-master. Being a happy, fulfilled Foreign Service spouse can be tricky, and calls for a practically inhuman amount of positive energy and *joie de vive*. None of us feels that way all the time, and surely every person who has been in this position can tell stories of deep grumpiness and resentment toward what can seem like an unending series of tortures. I know I can. However, the people who would classify themselves as "successful" at navigating this lifestyle would surely also consider themselves lucky to be living it. Finding the good in each post is key to finding happiness both in your career and in your life. Making sure that you're not succumbing to job-panic and selling yourself short hinges, to a

certain extent, on your overall satisfaction. So find the silver linings. A post with little in the way of viable paid work may have a host of interesting volunteer opportunities. A post that seems like a career dead-end may offer up the luxury of exploring a hobby and spending more time on non-career tasks. Having to really pound the pavement in search of your perfect job will give you a unique window into host country culture. The smaller posts in developing nations that may seem like the last place you'd like to live may in fact be real career boosters. How many Harvard-educated, English-speaking professors of psychology can there be in Fredonia? Play your cards right and you could be a consultant to the Ministry of Health while posted there. **To quote a fortune cookie: Opportunities are found in the oddest of places. Go out and find them!**

- *Adrienne Scherger grew up in four different African countries with a USAID father and a former CLO mother. Besides being a freelance writer and editor, she is currently the CLO in Tirana, Albania where her husband is the Administrative Officer for the Peace Corps. Other posts include Kiev, Ukraine.*



Functional Training and Other Learning Opportunities

The Writer's Center Workshops

Do you have the beginning of a story or screenplay tucked away at the bottom of your sea-freight? Did you ever wish you could capture the wonder and weirdness of your last post in an essay or feature article? Maybe you have an idea, but are not sure how to develop it. On the other hand, perhaps a little voice in your head whispers that you should ignore your desire to write and instead develop your "employable skills." If so, it may be time to silence that little voice.

Few job skills apply more universally, or are prized more highly, than the ability to write well. As the world becomes more complex and interdependent, the need for clear writing is growing. This is why it is no longer uncommon to see the literate generalist promoted over the narrow specialist in many diverse fields. Whether the objective is to entertain, convince, explain or record, good writers have – quite literally – the last word.

The Writer's Center offers a range of workshops on the Internet in various genres of writing – poetry, essay, memoir, travel writing, short fiction, the novel, grant writing, humor, and other topics. Each workshop is led by a seasoned, published author with long experience in teaching. As an independent, non-academic institution, there are no grades or degrees to give you an artificial sense of progress or achievement. In Internet workshops at the Writer's Center, you join adults who are serious about their writing, and who know that their real reward is the manuscript they complete – and often eventually get published – and the (highly portable) skills they acquire in the process.

The Writer's Center is a non-profit community of writers and aspiring writers, as well as publishers, editors, and literary agents. In addition to offerings on the Internet, the Writer's

Center offers a full program of traditional, face-to-face workshops at locations in Bethesda, Silver Spring, Glen Echo and Arlington – so the community you join overseas will be there for you on your next Washington assignment. Visit www.writer.org and jump-start your writing career wherever you may be in the world.

- *With an MBA from INSEAD (Fontainebleau, France) and married to a Foreign Service political officer, Gregory Robison has pursued a number of activities while accompanying his wife on foreign assignments over about 12 years. During their first post in Jamaica, he was general manager of a locally owned manufacturing company. In subsequent postings, he was a student in the Ecole biblique et archéologique française de Jerusalem; ran a venture capital company in Bulgaria; was a printmaker in Uganda; and president of the Scottish Arts Club in Edinburgh. He is currently Executive Director of The Writer's Center in Bethesda, Maryland.*



Education and Youth

Listservs for Foreign Service Families

A few months ago the Family Liaison Office publicized the launch of AAFSW's new listserv for Foreign Service families with special needs children. For those wishing to join the special needs listserv, you can visit the group on the web at:

[<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSspecialneeds/>](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSspecialneeds/)

There is now another AAFSW listserv for Foreign Service parents of gifted and talented children at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fsgifted/>. Both links have excellent explanations of what these groups are all about. If you have children that fall into either category, you will find these listservs very useful and interesting. It is wonderful to see how Foreign Service family members can be a great resource for each other!

For those of you who want to find out what's going on with youth through the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, a yahoo group has been formed. To sign on, send an email to the executive director at fsyf@msn.com. You can also visit their newly redesigned website at www.fsyf.org.

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation has also just released a needs survey for both students and parents that you can take online – see their homepage at www.fsyf.org and look at the left sidebar. You will find other links to things going on, writing contests, and the awards from the site.

Coming Back to Washington? Find other Foreign Service family members for friendship and support!

Returning to Washington can sometimes be a daunting task, and it helps to find other people who “get it” when you talk about your life overseas and understand the FS lingo! Here are two groups you might want to connect with:

Association of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) - they offer various groups, including one for foreign born spouses and a wonderful playgroup for children ages birth to kindergarten. Their contact information is through their website at www.aafsw.org.

The **Foreign Service Youth Foundation** (www.fsfy.org) offers activities for elementary age children and families (Diplokids), middle schoolers (Globetrotters), and high school teens (AWAL).

Looking at Colleges? Check out the resources FLO has online for you!

The Education and Youth page www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm on the Family Liaison Office website has a wealth of information that is valuable for anyone doing the college search. Look at “High School and College Considerations for Foreign Service Youth” and “Scholarships, Financial Aid, and Internships” on the main blue menu from the Education and Youth homepage. The sites listed link to other fantastic websites – once you enter you will have access to all kinds of useful information! You might also want to read the chapters on college in our publication *Education Options for Foreign Service Family Members* at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/7232.htm>.

